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MILTON R. YOUNG, N. DAK.
MARK O. HATFIELD, OREG.
TED STEVENS, ALASKA
CHARLES MC C. MATHIAS, JR., MD.
RICHARD S. SCHWEIKER, PA.
HENRY BELLMON, OKLA.
LOWELL P. WEICKER, JR., CONN.
JAMES A. MC CLURE, IDAHO
PAUL LAXALT, NEV.
JAKE GARN, UTAH
HARRISON SCHMITT, N. MEX.
W. FEATHERSTONE REID, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOEL E. BONNER, JR., MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20050

cc: Tate

Dear Mr. President:

We are gravely concerned about reports that the Administration is considering a request by Saudi Arabia to purchase modification equipment for the F-15 aircraft the U.S. agreed to provide as part of the 1978 Middle East Arms Sale package. We urge you to deny this request.

It is this type of equipment -- namely additional fuel tanks and bomb racks -- that sparked heated debate during consideration of the proposed sale. The major contributing factor to Senate approval of the sale was a clear understanding that, as Secretary Brown stated in his 9 May 1978 letter to Chairman Sparkman, "Saudi Arabia has not requested nor do we intend to sell any other systems or armaments that would increase the range or enhance the ground attack capability of the F-15." Any modification of the planes to enhance offensive capabilities would be a direct violation of that earlier understanding.

We appreciate that heightening tension in the Middle East and Persian Gulf is cause for Saudi concern, and we can understand that these new tensions necessitate a Saudi review of its defense needs. Nonetheless, we point out that the spirit of the Arms Sale agreement precludes the transfer of any offensively-enhanced F-15s to Saudi Arabia.

We hope that you will clarify to the Saudi Government the nature of the agreement reached during Senate consideration of this matter, and reject without delay their request for aircraft modifications.

Very respectfully,

Warren G. Magnuson
WARREN G. MAGNUSON
United States Senator

THOMAS F. EAGLETON
United States Senator

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Cas Yost

CHARLES McC MATHIAS, JR.
United States Senator

X-
424-4654

PATRICK J. LEAHY
United States Senator

DANIEL K. INOUYE
United States Senator

JOHN C. CULVER
United States Senator